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Navy Medicine's Ebola Response

Filed under FORCE HEALTH AND SAFETY, OPERATIONS, PUBLIC HEALTH   (NO COMMENTS)

By Cmdr. (Dr.) Eric Deussing, director, Emergency Preparedness, Public Health Emergency Officer, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

LIBERIA (Oct. 3, 2014) Lt. James Regeimbal inspects and records samples received at a Naval Medical Research Center mobile laboratory. The Naval Medical Research Center sent two mobile testing labs to Liberia to support Operation United Assistance. Each two-person lab is capable of testing up to 80 samples per day. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Petty Officer Jerrold Diederich)

The ongoing and unprecedented Ebola outbreak has sadly affected and has challenged public health and health care systems across the globe.

Navy Medicine has extensive experience preparing for and responding to past infectious disease threats, such as pandemic H1N1 influenza; however the current Ebola outbreak poses a new threat, previously not seen on this scale.

The Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) responded to the spread of the Ebola Virus Disease with a special crisis team dedicated to protecting our personnel and stopping the outbreak.

In my role as the director of emergency preparedness at BUMED, I serve as a member of Navy Medicine's Ebola Crisis Action Team (CAT) and oversee day-to-

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In my role as the director of emergency preparedness at BUMED, I serve as a member of Navy Medicine's Ebola Crisis Action Team (CAT) and oversee day-to-day Navy Medicine Ebola response operations.

day Navy Medicine Ebola response operations. The CAT team is comprised of 21 representatives from throughout the organization and serves as the single crisis response node for Navy Medicine; it is tasked to consolidate, vet, and report critical contingency information and respond to large scale and complex reportable events.

When the CAT was initially activated, the number of tasks and requests for information were daunting. We quickly established a battle rhythm and a common operating picture to systematically tackle issues. Some of the issues we faced included preparing hospitals to detect, protect, and respond to Ebola; creating Ebola personal protective equipment (PPE) guidance and protocols; training personnel deploying to West Africa; and establishing procedures to monitor individuals returning from West Africa.

Throughout the CAT's ongoing response effort, our goal has been to ensure the highest level of safety for our Navy family and to do our part to fight this deadly disease. Though the threat of Ebola remains significant, the resolve and resourcefulness of the CAT has been equal to the task.

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